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RWANDA/BURUNDI WEEKLY REPORT

Tuesday, 29 August, 1995

RELEASED IN FULL

SUMMARY

There were two major developments in Rwanda during the week beginning August 21. A forced repatriation of refugees from Zaire to Rwanda and Burundi which had begun on August 19 continued through the 24th. On the 28th, the National Assembly voted overwhelmingly to dismiss the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, at the President's request. Dutch Minister Pronk asked Special Coordinator Bogosian to meet him in Kigali to deliver a joint demarche on September 5 or 6.

DRL reports that there appears to be a good candidate to replace Bill Clarence as head of the human rights monitors in Rwanda. The UN Security Council approved the Burundi Commission of Inquiry last night.

Refugees

The GOZ on August 24 ended the forced repatriation of Rwandan and Burundi refugees from eastern Zaire after UNHCR agreed to restart a voluntary repatriation program. Since August 19 more than 15,000 refugees (13,000 Rwandans and 2,000 Burundians) had been forcefully repatriated.

An anticipated large-scale voluntary response did not materialize; however, on August 25 only 220 refugees from the Goma area repatriated and only 47 the next day. UNHCR fears that if numbers do not increase, the GOZ will again begin forced repatriations.

High Commissioner Ogata meets with PM Kengo on August 29 in Geneva to discuss solutions to the refugee crisis. UNHCR is concerned Kengo will not be conciliatory and will hold to his demand that all refugees leave the eastern Zaire camps by December 31.

Diplomatic/Political

On August 28, the Rwandan National Assembly was called into an extraordinary meeting, where the President asked for a motion of no confidence in the government. The

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motion passed with 55 votes for and 5 abstentions. Technically, all the ministers except the Prime Minister stay in office until their successors are named, and Deputy Prime Minister Colonel Alex Kanyarengwe will serve as caretaker Prime Minister. There are reports that the Ministers of the Interior and Justice will not be asked to join the new Cabinet, but that the new Prime Minister will be from the outgoing one's party. Old Rwandan hands view these dismissals as a "dangerous" sign for reconciliation. Rumored reports indicate they were dismissed because they angered Kagame when they criticized army actions against civilians.

Amb. Rawson will approach the GOR today to note our concern about this development and to seek assurances that the new government will be committed to repatriation, reconciliation, national reconstruction and human rights. Belgium and France have adopted a wait and see attitude and will not make public statements. Dutch Minister Pronk asked Special Coordinator Bogosian to meet him in Kigali on September 5 or 6 to deliver a joint demarche about the change in government.

Security Situation

Rwanda remained fairly peaceful, despite the large influx of refugees and the change of government. The Embassy urged Americans to be careful after the vote of no confidence.

In Burundi, the military has pushed the militias out of Cibitoke and Buzanza cities and is fighting them in and around the Kibira National Forest, which runs to the Rwanda border.

UN Human Rights Field Office

The UN's Human Rights Field Office, better known as the Monitor's Program, has shown improvement in some areas but continues to be beset by leadership and morale problems. Although High Commissioner Ayala Lasso made a commitment to you (and to Vice President Gore) in May to replace the UK's Bill Clarence as head of the program, he

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has not yet done so. He argues that he cannot ask Clarence to leave until a replacement is named. (We do not agree: Based on what we know, Clarence's departure would be a net plus even without an immediate replacement.)

Our favored candidate to succeed Clarence has finally agreed to taking over the program. Former Amnesty International SYG Ian Martin (just back from his Haiti UN Human Rights assignment) told DRL and AID/OTI on August 18 that he would be prepared to take over by October 1. If we can get word out to Kigali in the near future that Martin will be replacing Clarence in October, it would likely be possible to stanch the personnel drain and salvage the operation. Ayala and Martin were to meet in Geneva this week to discuss the succession; however, we have not been able to get any information from Geneva on how or whether Ayala and Martin reached an agreement.

Burundi Commission of Inquiry

The UN Security Council approved the Burundi Commission of Inquiry on Monday, August 28. The resolution passed unanimously. Ambassador Krueger says the Burundi government (President and PM) supports establishment of the Commission, but the PermRep had not communicated that support to the UN. Establishment of the Commission is a major victory for our policy to counter the current climate of impunity in Burundi. Now we must get the Commission up and running. The Secretary General will appoint the members and staff. We are currently considering how the USG can support the commission through personnel secondments, equipment, and financing.

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